

New Canadian Poetry: Anthologizing the Nation and After

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“Our literature is ‘free of agenda. It has an internationalism of appeal.’”
—Phyllis Bruce, “Canadian Writing is blissfully Agenda-Free”
(*Vancouver Sun*, July 29, 2006, Sec C p9)

Perhaps the agenda of “our literature” is best explained by the above quote if we substitute the phrase “a neo-liberalism of appeal”, or “an appeal within a globalized, neo liberal market, because it does not contradict the program of neo-liberalism”. It should be stated that Bruce is relaying “a message she has received from dozens of foreign publishers”. Of course a closer examination of the context of Bruce’s comment is necessary. She was speaking at Simon Fraser University’s annual Symposium on the Novel, this year titled: “Elsewhere Literature: Canadian Fiction Goes International.” Katherine Hamer, the author of the newspaper article entitled “Canadian Writing is blissfully Agenda-Free,” describes Bruce as the “legendary Canadian publisher”. Although it is not mentioned anywhere in the article, Bruce is publisher of Phyllis Bruce Books, an imprint of Harper Collins Canada where “Her authors have been published around the world in many languages.” The “foreign publisher” comment is all the more interesting considering the position of Harper Collins Canada as a so-called ‘branch plant publisher’.

In summarizing the discussion about “what makes a novel Canadian” at the symposium Hamer states: “they covered themes of rootlessness, otherness and even whether we have a collective national identity. Some wondered whether we have arrived at a “post-national” literature, one made up more of our multi-ethnic backgrounds than the Canadian fiction of old, which spoke of hardship, extreme weather and shaggy wildlife.” Apparently several authors mentioned Pico Ayer’s description of Canadians, represented in the article as, “a shape-shifter country, lacking the usual borders, at least on a mental level”. In summary various others characterized their views ranging from Anar Ali’s excitement, “there’s room for all of the different stories”, to Eden Robinson’s wish not “to be seen as an ambassador for a whole country’s worth of native peoples”, but rather “first and foremost as a writer,” Lewis DeSoto’s plea that “We should be careful about pushing novels forward as a nationalist enterprise or a community enterprise,.” and J.B. McKinnon’s claim “that his identity as a Canadian writer falls far behind his self-image as a British Columbian”. DeSoto is also quoted as saying “we’re interested in each other because we’re not quite sure who we are. So we read about each other in novels.” In the article the last word is left to Bruce quoting the unnamed foreign

publishers: “That, her colleagues agreed, is a truly Canadian characteristic”.

I have used a lot of space to summarize a recent article about what I would call the “New Canadian Novel” in order to make a simple point. That article could as easily have been written about something called “New Canadian Poetry,”; only the names would have to be changed to protect the innocent. Given that the goings-on at the symposium could easily have been misreported, I have followed the letters to the editor section since the article first appeared and have seen no demands for retraction, so I am going to assume that the reportage is at least accurate within the scruples of *The Vancouver Sun* (owned by CanWest Global Communications Corporation of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada). What initially caught my eye and makes the above move from novel to poetry more plausible is the name Phyllis Bruce, who also happened to co-edit with poet Garry Geddes a formative anthology of “Canadian Poetry”. (I am using quotation marks in this context to emphasize the contested nature of the construction). A survey of Canadian poetry anthologies, which I will undertake here, will demonstrate the complexities—and complicities—involved in proposing the problematic category “New Canadian Poetry.”

15 Canadian Poets was published by Oxford University Press (Canadian Branch), their characterization, not mine, in 1970. The anthology has been expanded many times since then, Geddes and Bruce’s *15 Canadian Poets Plus Five* (a 1978 revision of their 1970 collection) *15 Canadian Poets x 2* (the 1988 update), and finally minus Bruce, *15 Canadian Poets x 3* in 2001. With a very brief preface—1 full page—that begs off an introduction, ostensibly because the individual notes on the poets covers the same ground, Bruce and Geddes lay out the enduring tropes of many Canadian poetry anthologies, particularly those aimed at an academic audience: “Ultimately there are no prescriptive criteria to offer for choices that are highly subjective; it can only be hoped that the book reflects what is happening in the art itself”. Elsewhere in the preface we are told that the editors hope to “suggest the unusual scope and variety of poetry written in English Canada since the Second World War. At the same time we wanted to provide a selection in depth from the work of each poet.” They go on to explain that they have chosen 6 new writers, 5 mid career and 4 established writers. A quick review of the notes on the poets makes it clear from their mix of biographical and impressionistic critiques, that the anthology is aimed at an academic market, although this is not stated. Of course publication by a University Press such as Oxford is an inescapable identifier of both the market and potential readership.

Oxford takes a somewhat proprietary interest in things Canadian with their publication of *The Oxford Book of Canadian Verse* edited by poet A.J. M. Smith in 1960, Margaret Atwood’s *The New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse in English* in 1982. It should also be noted that in 1973 Oxford also published Garry Geddes’ *20th Century Poetry and Poetics*. Smith identifies two strains in both French and English Canadian

poetry: “One group has made an effort to express whatever is unique or local in Canadian life while the other has concentrated on what it has in common with life everywhere”. Either way, in both official languages, what makes Canadian poetry distinct according to Smith is “its eclectic detachment”. Perhaps, in Bruce’s terms, its being “agenda free”. Atwood drops the French in her later edition because of the “yeast like growth of poetry in French as well as in English” since 1960, she recognizes “regionalism”, does not represent “the cutting edge”, eschews feminism (“no poet is excluded because he is male”), suggests that something happened in the sixties (which of course in Canada lasted until 1975), that something was that poetry became the predominate literary form in Canada, “then there was ‘cultural nationalism’” and finally, Canadian poetry survives all this and “Finally, it is its own”, neither French, English nor American. Perhaps it has taken on in Bruce’s terms “an internationalism of appeal.”

Of course these are not the only Canadian poetry anthologies attempting to represent something of “Canada” and “Poetry”. It is interesting to note that with the exception of Bruce all of the editors so far are poets. In the early fifties both Bliss Carman and Earle Birney turned their hands to anthologizing: Carman with Lorne Pierce, and V.B. Rhodenizer, edited *Canadian Poetry in English* in 1954, published by The Ryerson Press. Curiously Ryerson had published Birney’s *Twentieth Century Canadian Poetry* only one year earlier. This collection is aimed at both “the general reader and the teacher and student of Canadian Literature, particularly at the matriculation and university level.” Birney is careful to call attention to his avoidance of what he calls “faded ‘Victorian’ versifying that historical collections feel bound to include.” This early anthology makes a distinction between “poetry” and “verse” while neither Atwood nor Smith even comment on the distinction, if they make one. Must be Birney’s Trotskyite background. (See Louis Cabris on Birney’s Trotskyite Poetics). He also neglects “the fashionably obscure or highly experimental work,” as if the two are one in the same. Personally I’d like to see some highly experimental Canadian poetry from between 1900 and 1950, but Birney sees it being only of interest to the “very sophisticated palate.” He does however make a very tentative step toward a kind of postmodern statement when he proposes, “No book, however carefully made, can succeed without the co-operation of its readers.” He goes on to undercut this statement by asserting that poetry is “created to be enjoyed,” as if this is the only reason to write poetry. Strangely Atwood also includes a long panegyric to her own reading habits: she reads for entertainment. Of course neither tells us what they mean by enjoyment or entertainment. But Birney does say that authentic poetry is: “the communication of the imaginations of Canadians to their fellow-men in this twentieth century”.

While Birney’s general reader/canonical text is an historical survey, it is also restricted to a certain limited time period. There are temporal as well as spatial restrictions that are both stated and implied, as there are in the other anthologies above.

Birney does not mention poetry written in any language other than English and he does not mention issues of race, class or gender. His stated exclusions range from the aforementioned “faded ‘Victorian versifying’” to “highly experimental work”; nevertheless, he is clearly aiming for an audience or readership ready for as he puts it “more challenging Literature”. I have found no other direct address to audience as in Birney; I am assuming he is mixing his role as poet in with that of educator and anthologizer. There are however a few more of these “national” anthologies as Frank Davey characterizes them in his essay “Poetry, Audience, Politics and Region” written in 1992, worth a brief look.

In his introduction to *Poets of the Confederation* in 1960, Malcolm Ross is able to state quite confidently that: “Canada does not have, did not have, will not have writers as specifically and identifiably Canadian as Whitman and Hemingway are identifiably American”. He goes on to make his case for a Canadian poetry and poets who are “...also (and at the same time) thoroughgoing provincials (with a feeling for place) and thoroughgoing citizens of the world (with a feeling for time).” Milton Wilson in *Poetry of Mid-Century 1940-1960*, compiled in 1964 writes of “presenting a few individual poets in depth,” along the lines of Ross’s confederation collection, “but also allowing some new voices to be heard as the two decades draw to a close.”

The above are academic critics with a responsibility to the canon. The final book of the poetry series from McLelland and Stewart’s New Canadian Library series is given over to the poet Eli Mandel, and here we first encounter the temporal construction of the “now” contained within the title *Poets of Contemporary Canada, 1960 to 1970* which was published in 1972. Still maintaining a posture of retrospection rather than prophecy, as Mandel identifies the two competing possibilities, he introduces a concept previously only hinted at, that of “the best of,”—work “more concerned with achievement than with ‘new directions’.” While maintaining that the poets chosen were those who were ‘present’ to him, insistent that they be heard, (conjuring an image of poets kicking down doors), Mandel quickly shifts into a paradoxical stance: “we do not choose the present, we are chosen by it”. Judging by this introduction to the contemporary, one could fairly safely assume that the “new” is actually the best of the recent old, echoing and reversing Pound, “make it old, but make it good”. At the same time Mandel is able to discern what he calls a “proletarianism of the commune” which is “opposed to the imperialism of multi national corporations, technology, and America.” O! Would that it was only true! That more than a radical fringe of Canadian cultural nationalism had been able to get beyond a simple anti-Americanism and look at emerging global trends. Mandel, himself a poet, as well as an academic critic, seems unnecessarily confused; Canadians, poets or otherwise occupied, seem unlikely to rise up demanding coherent introductions to anthologies of poetry be they ‘new’ or historical.

Taking a somewhat contrarian point of view is the final “national” anthology from

this time frame, *Made in Canada, New Poems of the Seventies*, edited by Douglas Lochhead and Raymond Souster and published by Oberon in 1970. So a poet, and an academic, published by a press so far out of the market that they refused to offer discounts to the book trade for a period, combine to produce an anthology that points very directly at nationalism, while simultaneously hinting at upcoming transnational corporations, echoing as it does the “made in Japan” label that terrified western capitalism at that time. That this anthology is also “made in Canada” for export, they helpfully let us know. The editors also conclude in their introduction “that the poetry scene in English Canada as we enter the seventies is equaled in variety, excitement and technical excellence only in the United States.” They go on to explicate their editorial methods by stating that they invited 90 poets to submit poems of their choice, previously unpublished in book form, and that they have selected only “the cream of their submissions.” Again their words, not mine. So what do they tell us they have learned from this creaming of emissions, or is it submissions? Surprisingly not much and most of it is contradictory. First, they state that in “Canada, as in England and the U.S. poetry has entered a period of consolidation.” It’s hard to tell what exactly is meant by this other than poets “welcomed the chance to catch their breath, regroup their forces, to plan new strategies”. Secondly, few “modern Canadian poets make use of either rhyme or regular verse patterns”; furthermore, and we are influenced by the Americans but should consider “the best of poetry in other languages”. The opening remarks to the introduction are equally puzzling: “this anthology is contemporary and has the word ‘now’ stamped all over it”. At least thankfully they have dropped the term verse, as in “official Verse Culture” (Charles Bernstein’s term). The introduction goes on to make it clear that this is not only absurd, it is misleading. How do the editors know when a poem is written? This of course is a side trip untaken, given that I am interested primarily in the three words: new, Canadian, and poetry, and when used in concert the phrase “New Canadian Poetry”.

Another side trip, necessarily taken, is into the realm of what Davey refers to as “contingent anthologies,” mostly represented by what are disparagingly referred to as poetry by New Canadians or otherwise marginalized Canadians such as women, Japanese, Italians, Ukrainians, Indians, —North American and East Asian—Mennonites, etc etc which speak in various ways to Canadian Multiculturalism. Smaro Kambourelli has thoroughly dealt with Ethnic anthologies in chapter 3 of *Scandalous Bodies—Ethnic Anthologies: from Designated Margins to Postmodern Multiculturalism*, which basically postulates that the marginalized body must give into the totalizing impulse of the Canadian Nation. I have included racialized bodies, gendered bodies and would also include classed bodies in the above construction. When I say “bodies” in this context I mean anthologies representing bodies of work. Anthologies such as *Writing Class: The Kootenay School of Writing Anthology* (1999), fits here, because there is no attempt to elide that construction with Canadian, whereas *East of Main: An Anthology of Poems*

from *East Vancouver*, published in 1989 by Vancouver's Pulp Press identifies the poetry within as an unhyphenated Canadian experience. *Poetry by Canadian Women* (1989), edited by Rosemary Sullivan and again from Oxford, likewise does not fit because there is no hyphen and the women are Canadian first. *Many Voices: an Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Indian Poetry* (1977), refuses in the introduction to speak for itself, relying on the poems to speak for "themselves" and attempt to represent a "cultural revival" within a Canadian context. What is clear is that the contingent anthologies are actually made up of what is left out of National constructions. Canadian nationalism as constructed through the ideological state apparatus of the "Canadian Poetry Anthology" is English, white, predominantly male and upper middle class to upper class and formally conservative. Multiculturalism is hyphenated and constructed elsewhere.

Returning to national anthologies I want to look briefly at two from the 80s. First, *The Contemporary Canadian Poem Anthology* edited by George Bowering and published by Coach House Press in 1983. This four-volume set (under 100 pages in each volume) takes quite a different outlook from the others, organizing not along historical or simply contemporary lines, but rather form. According to Bowering in his introduction:

Diverse as they are, there is one thing these twenty poets hold in common, that being the assumption or belief that the animator of poetry is language. Not politics, not nationalism, not theme, not personality, not humanism, not real life, not the message, not self-expression, not the nobility of work, not the spirit of religion, not the Canadian Tradition — but language. The centre & the impetus, the world & the creation of poetry is language.

This could be considered as contingent as could *The Canadian Long Poem Anthology* and *The New Canadian Long Poem Anthology*, and thus only of interest in terms of the designation of the words "new" and "Canadian." Any anthology that does not meet the test of Canadianess, i.e. English, White etc., is contingent and not national.

Another heavily saturated anthology is the *New Press' Canadian Classics Canadian Poetry* (1982) edited by Jack David and Robert Lecker with an introduction by George Woodcock. The presence of Woodcock and his introduction emphasize the historical approach that is not exclusive but critical in terms of significance and thus exclusive. As Woodcock puts it: "The editors of *Canadian Poetry* are not saying explicitly, "These are the best Canadian Poets," but they are saying at least implicitly, "these are, for one reason or another, the most significant Canadian Poets." We are given to understand that experimentalism is not significant.

It strikes me that these efforts to attach or at least imply phrases such as contemporary, now and new have a common antecedent in the anthology *The New American Poetry 1945-1960* edited by Donald Allen and Published by Grove Press in

1960. Much of what we have seen emphasizes a definition of Canadian as not American, and as Phyllis Bruce points out, the writing is self-identified as being without ideology. Of course, simply stating that writing is without ideology is not the same as being without ideology. For the most part the ideology embodied in the anthologies is both conservative and nationalist; where it is not, as in the KSW anthology, it is contingent. Of course as we have seen, anthologies have a certain bias toward the known rather than the new, no matter what they may name it. In many ways “contemporary” as a code word for new, does not work, but then in many ways it is only code for excluding the new if the new is to be represented by experimental. Theodore Adorno would have it that: “The greatness of works of art lies solely in their power to let those things be heard which ideology conceals. Whether intended or not their success transcends false consciousness.” When someone or something is claimed to be without ideology, that is a good sign that the ideology has been totalized.

As Theron U. Schmidt notes, Lukacz would describe capital as tending toward totalization, echoing its tendency to monopoly. Sartre would, in a rare moment of optimism, describe the dictatorship of the proletariat as the goal of totalization. While Mussolini would suggest that fascism is totalizing: there is no inside or outside, only the state and in this case the state maintained by terror. I think if we combine these three descriptions we can arrive at an apt description of the totalizing effect of so called “national anthologies” in the Canadian context. Capitalism is a process of totalization dependent on an extremely large proportion of the population of any state supporting or at least not actively opposing its aims. In the current state in which authority is held in common with capital, the terror that maintains consent is the fear of being left out. The poet without an audience. The anthology without readers. The state minus citizens and capital without consumers.

I have reviewed the most recent Report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee, popularly known as the Applebaum-Hébert report of 1982. This document is so totalizing in its affect that only a careful consideration can reveal its central contradiction. To offer a report that is supposedly to be the basis of government cultural policy while maintaining that “culture and the arts prevail when no one point of view prevails” is to ignore the obvious. The report is actually on “government regulated culture and art” with a view to supporting government approved culture and art. Most of the above anthologies were published with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts that came about after The Massey Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences in 1951. It took many years but eventually the Canada Council was established as the ideological state apparatus responsible for the arts at an arms length, a move meant to establish its freedom from ideology.

For the most part the national anthologies we have looked at are from the latter

part of the twentieth century, pre-globalism, pre 9/11. Now I would like to look at three recent additions to the corpus. *Breathing Fire 2: Canada's New Poets*, edited by Lorna Crozier & Patrick Lane published by Nightwood Editions in 2004; *Pissing Ice: An Anthology of 'New' Canadian Poets* edited by Jay MillAar and Jon Paul Fiorentino published by Book Thug in 2004; and *Shift and Switch: New Canadian Poetry* published by The Mercury Press in 2005. *Breathing Fire 2* is an update on *Breathing Fire: Canada's New Poets*, again edited by Lorna Crozier & Patrick Lane with a preface by Al Purdy, but published by Harbour Publishing (literally Nightwood's parent company) in 1995. Lineage is important in Canadian Poetry even inspiring a magazine called *Tads* amusingly referred to as Dads and Tads for the obvious parent-child structure of the editorial formation. I am reluctant to call it a board or a collective as the formal structure is unclear to me whereas the parent child structure is abundantly clear. *Pissing Ice* is clearly an answer to *Breathing Fire* and *Breathing Fire 2*, its title alone, obviating the need for an introduction, preface or cover blurb, while the cover art depicting a medical specimen bottle with cubes of frozen, we are to suppose, urine, filling the jar is all the direction we get.

Breathing Fire caused quite a commotion in 1995. The introduction, with its insistence that what was being represented was “the good poem finely wrought,” outraged some and offended others. Some were not happy to be excluded, others were happy they were not included. The new edition outlines further the selection process:

Thirty-three poets grace these pages with new and startling work. There are sixteen women and seventeen men, an accidental balance we didn't strive for. We refused to pay attention to gender just as we refused to pay attention to geography, race, color or sexual orientation. All we wanted was to give poets from across Canada an opportunity to present their writing. Our concern was not for the bias of a particular genre, but for the good poem finely wrought. The voices presented in this anthology confirm what we have always believed: that there is room for every kind of poetry regardless of taste, attitude, or concern. (12)

As Reg Johanson points out in his review for the *Vancouver Rain*:

But they haven't found room for every kind of poetry in their anthology. While it turns out to be true that they refused to pay attention to gender, geography, race, color, or sexual orientation—which means that almost all the contributors are white and heterosexual, the usual default position of humanism—they did pay attention to writers who have come out of BFA and MFA (Bachelor or Master of Fine Arts) programs in Creative

Writing—most of the writers in the anthology have graduated from one or another of these programs. Creative Writing BFAs and MFAs are big business, and Crozier and Lane, working out of the University of Victoria, owe their living to them.

Johanson has made explicit what was ‘hidden’ in previous anthologies. He has pointedly drawn his references from a Roy Miki paper “The Future’s Tense: Editing, Canadian Style” in *Broken Entries: Race, Subjectivity, Writing*.

Though ostensibly representative of Canadian poetry, the editors’ inclusions advance a literary stance favouring conservative poetic forms and values belonging to the ideology of positivist humanism and its colonialist legacy (Page 36)

Miki is referring to the Geddes/Bruce anthologies and Geddes solo efforts, and this could also, as Johanson has chosen to do, be applied to most of what I have been calling “national anthologies”.

At this point reflecting on the language used by the editors of *Breathing Fire* it is useful to consider the following quote from Gregory Jusdanis:

Nearly two centuries after romanticism critics have not been able to look beyond that movement’s representation of the aesthetic as the asylum of counterculture. Although claiming to have deconstructed the aesthetic domain, they continue to use its language, strategies, and concepts. (Jusdanis 28)

Romanticism is generally considered to be a reaction to the Industrial Revolution in late 18th century Europe and its emphasis on reason. I would add only that the industrial revolution is in fact a part of the evolution of capitalism, and romanticism was very easily co-opted by and served capital happily. The phrase “Breathing Fire” surely evokes a romanticist vision of poetry, just as “Pissing Ice” undercuts that notion with its inversions, but it should not be taken as a complete rejection of those values. Neither does *Pissing Ice* find room for Johanson’s “every kind of poetry”, and who would expect a forty page stapled anthology to do anything of the sort. The lack of any sort of statement means that you have to actually read the poems to come to any determination on the contents, not a bad strategy. Unfortunately, the contents betray little awareness of a globalized world. Although there are typewriter poems, and graphic poems, any of these poems could have appeared in a contingent anthology of the eighties: mostly regional, although the region is “centraliaCentralia,” as bill bissett refers to Central

Canada. The poets are for the most part new or 'new' as the subtitle puts it. Which brings up the question of what is a new poet? If these were first poems, then most of them would be highschoolers and the poems wouldn't be as nearly accomplished.

For a definition of new we can look to our last and most recent anthology: *Shift and Switch: New Canadian Poetry*. There it is the, quintessential canonical title. With its three editors, each with an introduction, we have triple the chance to find out what exactly is meant by this appellation. derek beaulieu starts off with: "Shift and Switch: New Canadian Poetry gathers 41 contemporary poets who are actively working to define poetics and poetic community, beyond the "expected." Next he takes on the "neo conservative" anthologies of "finely wrought epiphanic moment" (I'm guessing Crozier and Lane and the "classical & humanist definitions of poetry") and avers, "An alternative must be offered." Next he claims that the writers in *Shift and Switch* "engage with social constructions, economic exchanges, & geopolitical definitions [...]." claims lineage with I assume Charles Bernstein claiming "The writers in *Shift & Switch* use poetry—in their writings and in their communities—as an interrogative form across genre to confront the unchallenged..." without ever telling us what communities or what unchallenged. Then back to "official verse culture" something I have pointed out that ended "officially" in 1982 with the Atwood *Anthology of Canadian Verse*. We've been getting contemporary now for a long time. To further confuse matters, Beaulieu riffs on commodification, invoking Steve McCaffery: "language [...] functions like money and speaks through us more than we actively produce within it." Most poets use some language or another whether it is visual or orthographic, but we don't learn how these poets resist commodification except for their Beaulieu- granted marginalization. In his last paragraph he falls back on what must be a cribbed romanticism, I just don't recognize the paraphrase: "these are voices that cleave a space, by seizing language itself, manipulating it in a way that offers new alternatives at every turn." So while the language is old the alternatives are new?

The contradictions abound in Jason Christie's introduction: the caveat that is not an apology. He tells us what this anthology is not, but not what it is, except a variety of the "underrepresented." I think the publisher would have rejected the subtitle "Underrepresented Canadian Poetry." At last, he finds refuge in Romanticism: "to find a warmer intelligence than the cold austerity of reason." Which is what you get when you "Breathe Fire". Christie also takes on other anthologies for their nationalist leanings, but what does the subtitle signal? There is also a retreat to internationalism.

This anthology is closer to *Breathing Fire* than it would care to admit, at least until we get to Angela Rawlings' share of the introduction where we get "documentation, cornucopia, celebration," followed by a sampling that only reiterates what she has already said. The sampling is somewhat misleading because the poetry in and of itself is as I have pointed out elsewhere full of articulations of both spatial and temporal spaces in a

globalized world.

Most of the poetry in this anthology is smarter than the editors' representation of it. The editors want to have it both ways; they want to fit the selected poetry into a tradition of "New Canadian Poetry" which comes after "official verse" while the poetry itself clearly does not fit. They want to be both national and contingent. It would be easy to blame the Canada Council, but that would only apply to publishers in the grant programs. There are probably as many who do not receive Council funds who could take on a project that was neither national nor contingent. As beaulieu says, "an alternative must be offered". If the *Shift & Switch* editors are not up to the challenge, what examples can be provided?

Strangely perhaps, I would suggest looking to an anthology of new Canadian poetics: *Sside/lines: A New Canadian Poetics*, which of course has the misfortune of pointing to poetry and poetics as nothing more than a "sideline," something to occupy your leisure time when you are not performing wage slavery in the global emporium down on the corner. There is also a lot of poetry in here supposedly, I assume, to illustrate the poetics. The trope is actually similar to what I have outlined above in reference to poetry anthologies, but as always sometimes a radical poem or poetic statement slips through. As editor rob mcLennan states, it "If there are theories of a national literature, they exist on a par with theories of Canadian nationalism, where any point of view is said to be given equal weight. Perhaps, isn't that the point?" Again the "blissfully agenda-free" writing that Phyllis Bruce espouses.

Before we can have an ideologically based poetry several questions need to be answered, not the least of which is who are 'we'? The closest I have seen is contained or at least pointed to in an essay by Jeff Derksen in the mcLennan anthology titled "'because capitalism makes the nouns and burns the connections'": Notes Towards an Articulatory Poetics." It is within the note on this title we find what maybe eventually a way forward, or at least out of the current morass of anthologies.

The specific echo here is to Bob Perelman. In "Person," Perelman provides an apt description of ideology as such and the relations of production in globalization: "[...] blizzards of chance down upon the fountain of youth / all without a verb / because capitalism makes the nouns / and burns the connections" (First World, 51). This is a productive metaphor of "textualizing the world" which foregrounds language within the production of the social. This is also a description which aligns the role I identify for the cultural within globalization: if capitalism burns the connections, an articulatory poetics points to the ashes.

The ashes are not those of capitalism but of the social within capitalism, if I

understand correctly. If “notes towards” are the first step, and an articulatory poetics can point to the “ashes,” then we need to get beyond the ashes and resist the metaphor of the phoenix rising from the ashes— a romantic metaphor—and begin “building a new world in the [s]hell of the old”. This would be echoed in the idea of a “cultural common front” not just internationalism for the sake of internationalism, but if as Silliman points out “poems both are and are not commodities” then they can be both inside and outside global(capital)ism. And an anthology could be, to mangle an old Noam Chomsky linguistics joke, “a language without an army and navy.”

However as we, whoever we are, have passed from official verse culture through New Canadian Poetry, it may be necessary to look elsewhere for a poetry in and of the globalized present. Whether the anthology can be rehabilitated or not, it seems imperative that we teach poetry in a different way, which is of course another subject. Lets give the last word to Susan Schultz from an interview in *How2*: “Bound anthologies are fixed, stiffly covered, and resemble small literary nation-states; they claim authority like territories that are governed, paid fealty to, often eventually invaded.”

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